

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 7028

By Southerland

A RESOLUTION to honor and congratulate Walt Stone upon his receipt of the Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should salute those citizens who, through their extraordinary efforts, have distinguished themselves as professionals and community leaders of whom we can all be proud; and

WHEREAS, one such noteworthy person is Walt Stone, who recently received the Federal Aviation Administration's Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award, a most befitting recognition of his outstanding abilities and tireless dedication to aviation; and

WHEREAS, the Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award recognizes individuals who have achieved fifty or more years of safe piloting experience and aircraft operations; and

WHEREAS, a distinguished veteran of the United States Navy, Mr. Stone enlisted in 1956; his first duty station was Whiting Field in Florida, where his duties included scheduling maintenance on 233 aircraft; and

WHEREAS, in 1957, he was sent to aviation prep school in Oklahoma, followed by aviation electronics technician school in Millington; and

WHEREAS, upon completing a twelve-week Morse code training program in Japan, Walt Stone continued his career in electronics, radar, and communications in the Navy, managing radio operations on most of the flights he crewed, including airplanes such as the P-2V and B-26, and as part of radar patrol squadrons; and

WHEREAS, at the conclusion of his naval career, Mr. Stone joined the RCA Service Company as an electronics technician and served as a supervisor for the company in the Bahamas before relocating to work at the Rosman Satellite Tracking Station in North Carolina; and

WHEREAS, in his role with RCA, Walt Stone helped track satellites that were part of NASA's interplanetary monitoring platform, as well as manned spaceflights, including tracking and monitoring the Apollo 11 moon landing in 1969; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Stone took over as fixed base operator at the Greeneville Airport in 1970 and managed the airport for the next decade as the head of American Aviation; and

WHEREAS, in addition to his many duties at the Greeneville Airport, including managing a flight school, charter flights, and training veterans, perhaps his most impactful operation at the airport was piloting medical "baby flights"; and

WHEREAS, the Greene Babies, First to Fly program began in 1977 and continued until 1984, providing a means for prematurely born or critically ill babies in Greene County to quickly fly to Knoxville or Nashville for advanced medical treatment; the flights often included Mr. Stone, an attending pediatrician, a respiratory therapist, a nurse, and an emergency medical technician and was the only program of its kind in East Tennessee at the time; and

WHEREAS, Walt Stone had taken his first flight in an aircraft in a blue and gold T-28 in 1956, and while his piloting days ended fifty years later in 2006, when he suffered a stroke while piloting an identical blue and gold T-28, his renowned association with aviation continues; and

WHEREAS, in recent years, Mr. Stone has been heavily involved in the Civil Air Patrol, the official auxiliary of the U.S. Air Force, serving as a communications officer and teaching fellow members about aerospace, aeronautics, metrology, and communications; and

WHEREAS, as a recipient of the Wright Brothers Award, Mr. Stone joins a select group of 7,724 individuals nationally who have been recognized for their significant contributions to aviation, with only 193 recipients in Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, Walt Stone epitomizes the spirit and commitment that are characteristic of a true Tennessean; and

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly find it appropriate to acknowledge and applaud Mr. Stone for his dedication to the State of Tennessee and its citizens; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor and congratulate Walt Stone upon his receipt of the Federal Aviation Administration's Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award, commend his ongoing commitment to the highest tenets of aviation, and extend to him our best wishes for continued success in his future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy and upon proper request made to the appropriate clerk, the language appearing immediately following the State seal appear without House or Senate designation.